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Australia

Citrus

Worst Frost in 20 Years Affects Australian Citrus Production

2006

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Report Highlights:

Severe frosts have hindered harvesting of new season navel oranges in two of Australia's major orange growing regions. Recent preliminary crop assessments in the Murray Valley and Riverland growing regions suggest a 20 per cent drop in navel orange production due to frost. Effects on the Valencia crop will not be known until later this year.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Canberra [AS1]
[AS]

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Previous to the frost, industry forecast figures indicated a three per cent increase from last season in the Australian navel crop to 240,000 tons; Valencia projections predicted a drop in production of 26 per cent, to 202,150 tons.

Australian Citrus Growers (ACG) President, Mark Chown said that reports from industry in the affected regions indicated the "worst frost event since 1982".

"Frosts have set in early this year across the citrus growing areas of the Riverland, Murray Valley and Riverina. The Riverina has had minimal damage due to prior rain. The Riverland and Murray Valley regions have experienced severe conditions. This has slowed fruit picking and packing rates for all markets," said Mr. Chown.

The industry is currently assessing fruit for freeze damage. Export forecasts for the U.S. market and soon-to-be opened China market have been reduced.

Source: The Australian Citrus Growers website: <http://www.austcitrus.org.au/>

Harvest Update: The naval harvest is about 15% completed, but the frost has stopped the harvest (the naval harvest runs through about August). Valencias are still green and maturing. Valencia harvest for exports begins in September and concludes in January (after January the remainder of the crop is utilized in the domestic market and for juice).

Protocol With China: On April 3, 2006 Australia signed a new quarantine protocol for the export of Australian citrus to China. The Chinese market for Australian citrus has been valued at \$A50 million and trade of oranges, mandarins, and lemons could begin this season. (For further information, see GAIN report AS6024).

Australia Export Statistics								
UDG: Oranges - Exports,								
Calendar Year: 2003 - 2005								
Partner Country	Unit	Quantity			% Share			% Change
		2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	
World	T	99265	102590	130636	100.00	100.00	100.00	27.34
United States	T	19206	22184	26535	19.35	21.62	20.31	19.62
Hong Kong	T	25275	18365	23816	25.46	17.90	18.23	29.68
Malaysia	T	17476	20807	21945	17.61	20.28	16.80	5.47
Singapore	T	10262	10060	10351	10.34	9.81	7.92	2.90
Japan	T	8521	6045	9746	8.58	5.89	7.46	61.23
United Arab Emirates	T	695	3405	7412	0.70	3.32	5.67	117.66
New Zealand	T	5669	5149	6963	5.71	5.02	5.33	35.22
Canada	T	2299	2927	3871	2.32	2.85	2.96	32.27

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